CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
The changing of business culture and industry has affected the trend of communication in Malaysia. This is due to the fact that Malaysia is becoming an industrialised country (Vision 2020) where English is used in international trade, science and technology transmission and internal communication (Sarjit: 1997). Malaysia as a developing nation acknowledges the role of English language in communication. Therefore, to enter a multi-cultural or global workplace it is indispensable for a person to be able to communicate in the language. Besides, the ability to speak and write in English is the stepping-stone to the opportunity for career advancement and it is a common scenario that the higher the position of an individual in an organisation, the wider the communication activities would be. Therefore, the ability to communicate in the language is essential in order to cater to the various communication responsibilities at the work place.

In coherence with the government policy in achieving Vision 2020, the demands for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are increasing. Therefore, the importance of the English language as an avenue for development is very much looked into (Asmah Abdullah et al: 1992). German Malaysian Institute (GMI), being well aware of the English language needs of the students at the workplace, offers an English language subject, which is called Technical English and Communication. The customised subject is meant to help the students during their study years as well as to prepare them in their career undertaking. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) believe that the
development of theoretical bases of language teaching indicates that individual learners and people in the arenas of commerce and technology need more attention in individual language learning needs.

This idea is supported by Robinson (1991) that learners who are just introduced in a certain discipline may require some instruction pertaining to the theories and practices of that discipline. This means that students need to be taught the "concepts and practices" related to their ground. Thus, the aim of the Technical English and Communication course at GMI in general, is to expose the students to the communication modes that are used at the workplace, so that they can perform effectively in their work.

However, to be on par with the changing modes of technology and communication behaviour, a curriculum or course should not stay invariable throughout the whole years of its implementation. Some innovation or modification should take place to maintain the well being of the curriculum/course content. Weir and Roberts (1994) indicate that, the purpose of evaluation is to improve the education quality of a usually in progress programme or project and evaluation also reveal some weaknesses in the curriculum.

Yalden (1987) points out that a syllabus which is an instrument coordinating the language teaching aspects should be adaptable to different circumstances, and not stiff. It should also be intentionally left without any specific conclusion and it should be subject to "constant revision" resulting from the comments or response from the students. Stake in his keynote address at a conference on "New Trends in Evaluation"
(1973) says evaluation is useless if the audience's interest and language are not recognised. It is crucial for an evaluator to be aware of the people he works for and understand their concerns. Considering that, evaluation on the TEC curriculum needs to be conducted in order to understand the learners' needs and requirements in learning the language. As a result, the curriculum will be beneficial to the students in performing their duties.

### 2.2 Definition of Evaluation

Evaluation as defined by Finch and Crunkilton (1992) is to decide the value of a curriculum or part of the curriculum which also comprises of collecting data to be employed in establishing the worth of the curriculum, programme or curriculum materials. Similarly, Skilbeck (1984) defines evaluation as to gather facts and establish conclusion on the curriculum, which constitute of a series of action like planning, designing and implementing the curriculum. David Hamilton's (cited from McNeil: 1996) idea on the curriculum evaluation is more general, in which it is sensible to do curriculum evaluation in ethically and empirically responding to the question "What should we do?" and "What can we do?". White (1988) strongly agrees that evaluation is judging the curriculum, not assessing the learner's achievement.

Evaluation is concerned not with assessing individual achievement but with making judgments about the curriculum. Formative evaluation, using a variety of techniques to those of needs analysis, together with ethnographic techniques of participant observation, acts as a feedback to curriculum developers.

(p: 154)
Brown (1989) defines evaluation as collecting and analysing all relevant data systematically in improving a particular curriculum, assessing the curriculum's effectiveness and efficiency and the participants' viewpoints according to the perspective of the institution.

White (1988) and Brown (1989) see evaluation as a way to improve the curriculum, which involves students' feedback and attitude towards the curriculum in determining the merit of it. White does not look at evaluation as a tool to assess students' achievements but a means to provide feedback to curriculum developers. Evaluation is definitely a reinforcement of the existing curriculum, which will benefit all involved in the curriculum. McNeil (1996) believes the idea of evaluation as a set of verified guidelines for practice that is if it is employed, essential decisions regarding what and how to teach will be more achievable.

Posner and Rudnitsky (1997) clarify that there are many types of decisions provided by evaluations and one of the decisions is course improvement decision. This evaluation type requires useful data gathering in deciding the aspects of improvements that can be implemented. Finch and Crunkilton say that by conducting an evaluation on the curriculum, it ensures the high quality of the curriculum and also identify the deficiencies so that major problems will not arise later.

Furthermore, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest that 'course design is a negotiated process...it needs to have built-in feedback channels to enable the course to respond to development.' Product evaluation, thus, might provide evidence of the students' English language skills which are required in the industry. This would
answer the questions how much and what kind of English communication is needed so that GMI can prepare the students for the communication tasks as required at work. As supported by Le Vasan (1994), language plays an important role in acquiring the information and knowledge and transferring the professional skills. Thus, there is a need for strategic refocus on the English language curriculum offered at GMI.

However, as pointed by Rudduck (cited in Baynw-Jardine and Holly: 1994), it is a challenge to see the relationship between evaluation and change as a means of supporting educational development rather than a technical problem to be overcome. This could be due to some perceptions that evaluation and change is done to overcome certain drawbacks in a particular curriculum and it is not to support the growth of education. Nevertheless, Weir and Roberts (1994) view curriculum evaluation as a process to improve the educational quality of a programme or project and from the evaluation, strengths and weaknesses of every aspect of the curriculum or programme (e.g. parts of the course, materials, or effective teaching methodology) can be identified.

To put it in a nutshell, evaluation does not only concern with the learners’ achievement in a curriculum or programme, but it also concerns mostly with the improvement of the curriculum or programme itself. In addition, it is not only vital to see learners are able to accomplish whatever is assigned to them, but it is also important to see whatever is set for the learners is greatly purposeful and satisfying the learners’ needs as well as other stakeholders. Evaluation is a means to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a particular curriculum or programme by undergoing the
process of data gathering and data analysis based on either a certain area of the curriculum or programme or the whole areas of the curriculum or programme as discussed by Finch and Crunkilton (1992). Consequently, the result of the data analysis might suggest some areas for improvements which are beneficial for the learners.

2.3 Purpose of Evaluation

Evaluation serves two common purposes (White: 1988). It is a means to review the students’ achievement and it is also a means to improve the curriculum. Brown (cited in Johnson, 1989) indicates that evaluation is meant to inform learners the results of their knowledge attainment and to diagnose areas of strengths and weaknesses if remediation is to be effective in bringing the students up to the required standard. In this case, both the instructor and the students must know the areas of students’ weaknesses. For the purpose of this type of evaluation, there are a number of aspects involved that contributed to the students’ performance namely teaching methodology and materials used. This form of evaluation is closely related to process evaluation whereby it intimately involves with teaching and learning strategies and administrative and decision making processes (Robinson: 1991).

On the contrary, the second purpose of evaluation, which is the focal point of this study, is to find out the areas for improvement of a particular curriculum. In identifying the areas of improvement, there are many methods that can be employed, for instance by considering the learners’ satisfaction and the learners’ suggestion about the curriculum.
Weir and Roberts (1994) ascertain that a broader approach seeks to embrace two dimensions of evaluation that is “evaluation for accountability” and “evaluation for development”. These evaluation approaches are different in terms of the parties, who conduct the evaluation wherein they have different interest in the evaluation,

The focus of evaluation for accountability is likely to be upon planned events: whether they occurred on schedule and made use of resources within the budget as planned, and whether they eventually produced the intended effects.

(Weir & Roberts: 6)

However,

Development-oriented evaluation is intended to improve the educational quality of a programme or project, normally while it is in progress. This form of evaluation may be carried out cooperatively between an external evaluator and the insider staff or by insiders only.

(Weir & Roberts: 7)

Evaluation for accountability focuses on the administration of a programme and the result of the programme whereas the development-oriented evaluation concentrates on the quality of the programme based on its educational perspective. In relating to this study, development-oriented evaluation is identical in its purpose that is to obtain the information from the students and the technical training officers concerning the TEC curriculum.

2.4 Approaches of Evaluation

In evaluating the curriculum, Finch and Crunkilton (1992) have produced a framework for curriculum evaluation, which comprises of context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation and product evaluation (CIPP). Finch and Crunkilton's
framework is similar to Stufflebeam’s model of evaluation that includes data on Context, Input, Process and Product (Stake: 1973). But to compare with Finch and Crunkilton’s CIPP, Stufflebeam’s is fairly generic, as McNeil describes that the context phase of evaluation is the stage where the evaluator deals with the definition of the environment, description of the “desired and actual conditions” and identification of the problems as it is also referred to “needs assessment”. Input is related to the decision in selecting the methods for achieving the educational objectives. Process evaluation is conducted to identify faults in the design and implementation of the curriculum. Finally, a product evaluation is meant to unveil the effects of the selected strategy or methodology on the curriculum.

Brumfit (1984) is sceptical about syllabuses that can be evaluated objectively but he counters the idea that a syllabus concerns with its suitability among the working people group needs regular and effective feedback, then changes can be implemented and if they (changes) make people despondent, the changes can be withdrawn. Ellington and Aris (2000) term the approaches to evaluation as “modes of evaluation”. Among the modes of evaluation being reviewed are formative and summative evaluation, internal and external evaluation, and scientific and illuminative evaluation. They suggest that the nature of the system being evaluated plays a crucial role in determining the approach to be adopted in evaluating an instructional system. Thus, Ellington and Aris propose a methodological approach developed by Karl Popper to be employed as the foundation of a particular educational evaluation, which has been discussed in chapter 1 (Figure 1). The approach attempts to improve an instructional system through a gradual process of “error elimination” in which the theory is very similar to Finch and Crunkilton model of “product evaluation”.

26
Nevertheless, to compare with the two concepts of approaches, Finch and Crunkilton’s “product evaluation” is easier to adopt and understand. This is because the term used is not complicated and does not carry a negative connotation as “error elimination” is very likely to be associated with overcoming the technical problem instead of supporting the educational development (Baynw-Jardine and Holly: 1994).

2.5 ESP Curriculum

The concept of ESP has been established for over four decades but it is still being debated regarding the meaning (Gatehouse: 2000). As many industries developed, many individuals are required to be more efficient in their communication. As suggested by Hutchinson and Waters (1989) that the effect of the development was to exert pressure on the language teaching profession to offer the language courses to people who need to use the language. Thus, many experts indulge themselves in developing courses and researches related to it.

Hutchinson and Waters see ESP as an approach rather than a product, meaning that ESP does not involve a particular kind of language, teaching material or methodology. They suggest that “the foundation of ESP is the simple questions: Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language?” This question relates to the learners, the language required, and the learning context. The key points here are learners, language required and language context which any institution must consider in offering an ESP course.

However, Robinson pinpoints that the quintessence of ESP is “…materials produced for use once only by one group of students in one place at any one time”. Robinson is
more concerned about the materials meant for specified type of learners whereas Hutchinson and Waters look at the emergence of ESP as the marker on the ways learners acquire language which learners employ different learning strategies, skills code different learning schemata, and are motivated by various needs and interests. Thus, materials prepared for the learners are equally important as the teaching methodology used in the classrooms.

Nevertheless, Strevens’ (1988) definition on ESP is more comprehensive. He makes a distinction between four absolute and two variable characteristics of ESP:

I. **Absolute characteristics:**

   ESP consists of English language teaching which is;

   (i) designed to meet the specified needs of the learner

   (ii) related in content (that is in themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities

   (iii) centred on language appropriate to those activities on syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics and so on, and analysis of the discourse and

   (iv) in contrast with ‘General English’.

II. **Variables characteristics:**

   ESP may be, but it is not necessarily;

   (i) restricted as to the learning skills to be learnt (for example, reading only)

   (ii) taught according to any pre-ordained methodology

Another definition given by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) might provide some better insight to the concept of ESP:
The ESP contains two major characteristics: Absolute Characteristics and Variable Characteristics.

I. Absolute Characteristics

i. ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;

ii. ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves

iii. ESP centred on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

II. Variable Characteristics

i. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;

ii. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;

iii. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;

iv. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;

v. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

In this definition Dudley-Evans and St. John have removed the absolute characteristic that is; “ESP is in contrast with General English” and inserts more variable characteristics. They suggest that ESP is more likely meant for adults and possibly for secondary school learners although it is not necessarily in accordance to a specific discipline. As for a broader definition of ESP, Hutchinson and Waters theorise, “ESP
is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning” (p.19). To differ from Hutchinson and Water's theory, West discusses the 5 concepts pointed out by Swales (1991), which are authenticity, research-base, language, need, and learning methodology.

i. Authenticity is related to the authentic text and authentic tasks which are relevant to the learners' educational needs.

ii. Research-base is "a trend towards papers that rely on some kind of database (textual or otherwise)” (Swales)

iii. Language is related to those items of vocabulary, patterns structure, and functions of language required for the purposes of the learners (Strevens: 1977)

iv. Need concerns with the purpose of the learners language use which is paramount (Strevens)

v. Learning methodology can be any learning or methodology that is appropriate to the learning and teaching situation.

These concepts are more specific and explicit in terms of the areas involved, thus, the process of gathering the information for constructing and implementing ESP course could be more focused.

The understanding of ESP theory is very crucial in this study due to several factors. The first factor can be that GMI is an institution which offers technical courses for students. Therefore, the needs of the students are different from the general needs of the other students from other institutions. GMI students' needs of English are predominantly toward helping them to succeed in their studies and later, working environment. Hence, this study supports the analysis of the syllabus contents
prepared for the learners which should be based on the learners needs in the classrooms and later in the workforce.

The second factor is related to the development and use of materials for the English course in the classrooms, whereby it should reflect the activities that the learners are doing and are going to do. Thus, this study should identify certain values that may be helpful in producing authentic teaching materials. As a result, the learners will not only be able to use them (the values) during their study years but also when they are working (that is from their experience in using those materials).

The third factor is concerned with the concept of the Technical English and Communication as an ESP course itself. By looking at the former learners' feedback on the syllabus contents, a conclusion can be derived whether the curriculum provided fulfils the learners' and industries' requirement, that makes it suitable to be categorised as an ESP course.

To sum it all, Robinson (1991) says that ESP is normally goal directed which means the students learning English language because they need the language for their study or work purposes and not because they have the interest in the English language or culture. Therefore, their goal of learning the language affects the activities and subject matter.
2.6. Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is an investigation conducted to identify before a curriculum is implemented. Yalden (1987) suggests that before a language framework is written a needs survey must be done. Detailed and specific information about the students are obtained from them so that the course prepared will fulfil their needs. Yalden also mentions that a teacher would form the focus (the framework) to be given to the course, choose appropriate units from the frameworks and arranging them for pedagogical treatment. Then, a consultation is done to the complete set of the frameworks, selection is made, and the chosen units are used in developing equivalent target language units.

Analysing Hutchinson and Waters point of view, needs analysis is essential to determine the content of a course. This is also supported by Robinson (1991: 3) that

"an ESP course is based on a needs analysis which aims to specify as closely as possible what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English."

Brindley (cited in Johnson: 1989) says need analysis has become a process of finding out as much as possible about the learners’ current and future language use before learning begins. It is a significant method of producing a curriculum besides restoring the community confidence, advancing the interests of previously ignored groups by allowing the clients to determine what they want to learn (McNeil: 1996). According to Richterich’s (1981) definition, needs analysis is a process in defining the learner’s language needs situation and next, defining the characteristics of the language used in that situations. In other words, this process is to anticipate the future language needs of the learners before they start learning a particular language programme.
Consequently, this study is trying to clarify the target needs or "necessities" of the students by looking at the curriculum that has been outlined for them. This clarified target needs might be able to assist the learners to function effectively in the target situation. Hence, for the purpose of this evaluation, the information on needs is definitely needed (Robinson: 1991). Robinson sees evaluation and needs analysis as two overlapping subjects in which the considerations of these 'wh-' questions are taken into account.

WHY carry out an evaluation?
WHAT is the subject of the evaluation?
WHO carries out the evaluation?
HOW is the evaluation carried out?
WHAT NEXT: What will happen to the result?

The answers derived from the questions devised by Robinson (1991) can be the direction of a certain curriculum development or enhancement as they evaluate and analyse the learners' needs.

According to Robinson, needs analysis is the foundation of an ESP course with the objectives to identify as detail as possible what the students have to perform in English. This study is not only evaluating the syllabus of Technical English and Communication but it also looks at the needs of the former students and also people who are involved in the industry so that the result can be used to enhance the current syllabus. Brindley (Johnson: 1989) says that when needs analysis is conducted only at the curriculum planning stage, it cannot be effective because students are unable to make convincing decisions until they become knowledgeable in the subject.
In relation to this study, evaluation is one way of doing needs analysis that is evaluating the existing curriculum so that whatever contents taught in the classrooms will reflect the future target language behaviour that is required by the students when they are ready to join the workforce. Inherently, needs analysis is an aspect of formative evaluation (Johnson: 1989) which is performed at some stage of the curriculum implementation.

Since GMI involves learners who undergo specific fields of study, it is applicable to conduct needs analysis on the former students in finding out what they really require based on their experiences. As a result, the institute would be able to develop a course that satisfies the students' needs. Richards (1984) suggests that it is vital to identify needs before determining the objectives of the course, content of the syllabus, methodology and the procedures of the evaluation. In this case, needs analysis is part of the evaluation process. White (1988) also suggests that needs analysis development is "a stage in syllabus design and a set of procedures" (p: 84) that evolved in relation to languages for specific purposes. It specifies the outcome that the learners anticipate to accomplish. However, it does not specify how the learners are going to accomplish it. In short, needs analysis provides information about what to include in a certain curriculum but it does not indicate how to implement it. Needs analysis is definitely parallel in its purpose to product evaluation that this study is trying to accomplish.

2.7 Review on other Related Studies

Some related studies have been done previously by scholars who are interested in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The studies are related to the specific field that is the communication content in industries or workplace. Such studies to
name a few, are conducted by Sargunan (ESP: 1997) "The Quest for Truth: An Ethnographic Journey", which looks at the "notion of success with regard to a communication event in the industry" and Hajibah Haji Osman (ESP: 1997) on "Proficiency via ESP: English for the Workplace" in which she concentrates on the "Effective Communication Skills" in achieving the today and tomorrow's challenges.

Sargunan's study can be considered as endless as she mentions,

I have not quite reached the end of the road, the journey itself has proved worthwhile, as it has afforded me numerous opportunities to see the less ordered, more authentic aspect of the human condition, all the more challenging to a researcher-cum-educator today.

(p: 81)

Hajibah's, on the other hand, looks at the methodology employed in teaching a group of learners which emphasises on the use of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) in teaching English Proficiency. Hajibah mentions that realising how important asset the employees are to the organisation, employers now are investing on the employees' training and partly to avoid miscommunication between both parties; employers and employees. Hence, "people problems" (lack of communication skills among people) as Hajibah terms it, is something to be corrected by the employers so that employees will be loyal to their respective organisation. This study is in fact another avenue of evaluation that looks at the effectiveness of the teaching methodology for the course offered.

Another study conducted by Chan Soon Keng (ESP: 1994) found that it is invaluable to have an interface with the industry in examining the requisite communication and interpersonal skills for a course design. The study conducted by Chan is very much similar to the current curriculum evaluation as it attempts to find out what is required
from the graduates in order to effectively operate in their working environment.

Chan’s findings show that,

… effective communication skills in the work place are essential prerequisites for employment, even for professions which are highly technological. Effective communicators have the competitive edge in career advancement, and in fact the higher one goes up the professional ladder the greater the need for one to possess good interpersonal skills. Next, the studies show that oral communication should be given priority in training and abundant practice provided.

(p: 42)

Therefore, it is important to highlight that Chan’s study is significantly enable the course developer to produce a language course that caters to the needs of the employers (e.g. hiring a graduate with certain communication skills ability).

In addition, there are also a number of studies done by previous post graduates researchers at University of Malaya itself, namely Yoo Kee Fong (2000), An Evaluation of an ESP Course at a Polytechnic in Malaysia, and Munisamy (1997), An Evaluation of the syllabus for English for Commercial Purposes”.

Yoo’s study mainly covers the entire aspects of a curriculum which means from the initial stage of the curriculum development to the implementation of the curriculum. However, Yoo’s samples are students who are still undergoing their enrolment in certain courses at a polytechnic in which they do not have much working environment experiences as well as communication. In his findings, there is a contradiction between teachers and students’ point of view in terms of the skills that should be acquired. Teachers think that skills like academic reading and writing are important
but students think that skills such as Social English is more significant. In general, the ESP curriculum offered to the students is not in accordance with the students’ needs. On the other hand, a study conducted by Munisamy is a product-oriented and it aims at investigating the effectiveness of the entire ECP (English for Commercial Purposes) syllabus. The respondents are final year commerce students who have gone through all the four Commercial English courses also at a particular polytechnic. The result of Munisamy’s study shows that there is a mismatch between the skills taught in the classrooms and the skills needed for specific jobs. The students are able to distinguish the skills for specific job needs due to their practical training experience that they have gone through, dissimilar to Yoo’s samples who are semester two students who have gone through the Commercial English 1 course, but they do not have any working experience.

In contrast, the samples of this research are involved in technical field namely Production Technology and Industrial Electronics and the previous studies involved with students majoring in Business Studies. The differences of the fields would produce different range of responses and needs.

Secondly, the samples are not students who are still pursuing their studies. The samples are former students, industrial workers, and Technical Training Officers who have experienced working in various industries. These samples would have the ability to closely relate their experiences and the communication skills required in the industries. As a result, the researcher is able to see the importance of each of the syllabus content.
In summary, curriculum evaluation is actually a broad subject of investigation and inter-related to other areas of curriculum development. By focusing on a specific category of curriculum evaluation, that is product evaluation, it might prove significant to TEC curriculum improvement. It could serve two basic purposes; to evaluate the curriculum for its contents and to identify the needs of the students according to the demand of their job tasks. In fact, this evaluation might also provide some insights and understandings in improving the quality of the TEC curriculum.